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LETTER DATED 6 FEBRUARY 1995 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I would like to bring to the attention of the members of the Security Council certain concerns with regard to the forthcoming end of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL).

It will be recalled that, in the report I submitted on 31 October 1994 (S/1994/1212) on the occasion of the expiry of ONUSAL's previous mandate period, I recommended to the Security Council the extension of ONUSAL until 30 April 1995, at which date that part of its functions requiring military and police personnel would have been completed. I also informed the Council that, before the Mission's termination, I would present my thoughts on mechanisms to maintain the capacity of the United Nations to verify compliance with those parts of the peace accords whose implementation was still pending, in accordance with the commitment undertaken by the United Nations as reaffirmed by the Council.

In resolution 961 (1994), the Security Council approved my recommendations regarding ONUSAL's performance of its mandate and decided to renew the mandate "for one final period until 30 April 1995". The Council also requested me to "report by 31 March 1995 on ONUSAL, including on the fulfilment and completion of its mandate and on modalities for its withdrawal, to be completed by 30 April 1995, in a manner consistent with the effective performance of its duties".

Informal reports on the status of the 19 May 1994 timetable for the implementation of the most important outstanding agreements have been made available periodically to the members of the Security Council. As they will see from the latest report, which is submitted separately, a somewhat disquieting situation still obtains, particularly as regards the implementation of agreements concerning land and other reintegration programmes including the difficult issue of human settlements, as well as those related to the judiciary, electoral reform and the binding recommendations of the Commission on the Truth. The recent forcible takeover of the Legislative Assembly and the Ministry of Finance and of land by members of the Association of Demobilized Members of the Armed Forces, which was fortunately defused with the assistance of ONUSAL, is but one symptom of lingering discontent at the failure to implement some parts of the peace agreements.

These considerations reaffirm my conviction that it is essential to put in place, following the disbandment of ONUSAL per se, a mechanism to continue the verification responsibilities and the good offices function that ONUSAL has carried out to date. I am raising the matter at this time, without waiting until late March, because the Council's decision in resolution 961 (1994) that ONUSAL's withdrawal should be completed by 30 April 1995 has the practical effect of reducing, well before that date, ONUSAL's capability to perform its duties effectively. This is because measures have to be taken well in advance of that date to draw down the Mission's personnel. It therefore becomes urgent that decisions be taken to enable the United Nations to continue to discharge its responsibilities without interruption, as has been requested by the Government of El Salvador and the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN), the signatories to the peace agreements.

The arrangement that I propose to put in place would consist of a small team of about eight Professionals, with the necessary support staff. This team would have the capability to provide good offices, to verify implementation of the outstanding points on the peace agreements and to provide a continuing flow of accurate and reliable information so that I can keep the Security Council informed as necessary.

ONUSAL has been coordinating closely with the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in El Salvador in order to ensure that the latter is in a position to continue to help to consolidate peace. I would ensure that this cooperation continues so as to maintain a truly integrated approach in the post-conflict peace-building phase. I would hope to minimize the costs of the United Nations team by utilizing UNDP facilities. However, it would be necessary for the team to maintain a separate identity, given its inherently political tasks and responsibilities and the fact that verification and good offices require an independence and impartiality that could prove difficult to reconcile with UNDP's role as a partner of the Government. The United Nations team would of course advise UNDP on the execution of peace-related programmes.

I would propose to establish this team of Professionals for an initial period of six months from the end of ONUSAL's mandate.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI